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ABSTRACT

This paper is divided into the following five sections, each of which considers an aspect of teaching grammar: the importance of teaching English grammar, teaching the patterns of words and sentences, the functions of words, making sentences, and a curriculum proposal for teaching standard English in the elementary grades through high school. (LL)

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A Sound Curriculum In English Grammar: Guidelines for Teachers and Parents

by

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS PAPER

The "mastery" of language is not an absolute skill which one either has or does not have; it is a skill which develops as long as one works at it, whether for a year or ten years or a lifetime. (page 2.)

There are those who argue for "the child's right to his own language." That right is not disputed, but supported, here. What is here maintained is that, whatever language is learned natively and by natural imitation, a knowledge of Standard English must be developed to permit the child to exercise another right, that of becoming knowledgeable about the nation and world in which he lives. (page 3.)

If imitation is the easiest way for the child to learn, it is also the hardest to offset later. Characteristics of a language learned through imitation—the precise tonal qualities of speech—may leave lifelong traces. Further, the longer an attempt to modify these characteristics is delayed, the harder it will be to do so. (page 5.)

Because the teacher is in such a strategic position to mold the child's language development, every teacher should be an expert language teacher; he is teaching *language* even as he teaches arithmetic, science, art, music, social studies or physical education. (page 5.)

Grammar is what distinguishes a sentence from a list of words randomly ordered. (page 9.)

As a general rule, whenever a word or sentence that is encountered in reading seems not to be thoroughly understood, an analysis is in order. These analytical processes will make it possible to achieve a fuller understanding of good literature, and good literature is far more effective in meeting and expanding interest than are stories that have been written down to the children's supposed language level. (page 34.)

Let it be clearly understood that *the understanding of principles is the goal*, not the learning of rules, not an absolutist or "purist" view of "the way the language should be," but the way it *is* when effectively used by authors of recognized stature. (page 37.)

. . . We should not assume that only English teachers need to know how to use the language, and *we should not allow in any classroom teachers who lack a mastery of it.* (page 42.)

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A SOUND CURRICULUM IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR: GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

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WHY TEACH ENGLISH GRAMMAR?

By the age of three most children are not only speaking in sentence patterns, but are creating sentences which they have never heard before. Long before they know what grammar is, they are saying whatever they want to say—or at least they think they are—and they are using every, or nearly every, basic sentence pattern that exists. Should we then use valuable school time to teach grammar?

Yes, we must, if children are to make the most of their native abilities. America, even before its beginnings as a nation, became a land of immigrants, of people from England, Germany, Holland, France, Spain and other lands. It has remained a nation to which people come from virtually every part of the world. Our language has adapted to them by the addition of some of their words and phrases, and they have adapted to it by learning at least some variant of English.

Should the child who already speaks Pennsylvania Dutch or Gullah learn to speak, read and write that specific language which has become the "learned dialect" of the schools and of the educated populace of the nation? Why? Why, when the child can use his local dialect adequately for immediate purposes, should he be expected, even required, to learn another form of language? His native dialect reflects and perpetuates his local culture, and he has every right to cherish that language and that culture. But precisely there is the limitation: a dialect reflects local or limited culture; its value indeed lies in its identification with its cultural milieu. For just that reason it also represents a limited possibility for understanding, profiting by and contributing to the larger, total culture of America.

The human race has learned to speak, to record and read, and to put together how things of the past, present and future relate to one another, how effect relates to cause, and how one set of causes and effects relates to another. All thinking is relational, and language is the means for perceiving, recording and using relationships. Language is to the human brain all that a programming system is to a computer—and much more, for the human brain is capable of original thought, esthetic imagination and creativity. But just as the computer must have its coding system, so the brain must have its language, and the more language it has mastered, the more effectively it can work.

The juggler who can keep three balls in the air perfectly is skilled, but not so skilled as one who can manage four. Just so, the child who can handle a vocabulary of a thousand words and every simple sentence structure has achieved something, but not so much as the child who can manage two thousand words and complex sentences. The "mastery" of language is not an absolute skill which one either has or does not have; it is a skill which develops as long as one works at it, whether for a year or ten years or a lifetime.

Words are the units of language by which we give names to things, to processes, to emotions and to ideas. Words are "category tags"; they are like boxes or drawers in which we store things so we will know where to find them. For instance, by calling every animal of one general kind a "horse" we make it possible to recognize all horses, to "know" what they are, and to feel at ease putting them in their proper niche (or stall). Without categories, every horse would have to be called by a separate word. Ten horses would need ten words. With a mastery of categories, we know not only all the horses we have seen, but the millions of them, past, present and future, here and everywhere else in the world, that we will never see.

The child is born with no words, no awareness of categories. Before he begins to speak he recognizes a number of words. By the time he starts school he knows hundreds, more likely thousands, of words, depending on the language used in his environment, including the television shows he watches. Note that he has *some* knowledge of these words; he does not have absolute knowledge. He may know from visiting a zoo what a rhinoceros looks like, but he will not yet know that the name is made up of separate words used long ago: *rhino* is from the Greek *RHEIN,* to run or flow, and was applied to noses (the Greeks must have had a lot of colds and seen a lot of runny noses!); and from the Greek *KEROS,* or horn. A *rhinoceros* is a "nose-horn" animal.

As the child grows to adulthood, he should double and redouble his vocabulary until he knows many thousands of words. If the child is well taught, he will come to know the meanings of the parts that have been put together to make each word.

Words go together in sentences, and these too have a rich and wonderful variety. The child learns to construct sentences, just as he learns to use words, by first hearing them and imitating what he hears. The sentences he recognizes and uses give him a means of understanding and expressing ideas, emotions, processes and rela-

tionships, and of revealing his own creativity.

Why can't he do these things with a local dialect? He can, in a limited way, but the dialect, by definition, has not been developed far enough to cope with the full range of human experiences.

The appeal of a local dialect is twofold: the child is already familiar with it, having heard it since birth, and having learned it by imitation in the years when he was most receptive to language learning; and it is easy—it makes no demands on him beyond what comes naturally. The dialect—whatever it is, for it is true of all—has its beauty, its oral appeal and its own rich expressiveness. In recognition of this special power and charm, first-rate authors have used dialects to enrich their literary masterpieces: John Millington Synge did so in *Riders to the Sea*, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings in *The Yearling*, and Mark Twain and William Faulkner in many of their novels and short stories. They have *used* dialects on a base of Standard English. A dialect in their hands is more like the seasoning of the stew than the meat, potatoes, onions and carrots that are its substance.

It might even happen that, in the course of generations, a dialect such as Cockney English could develop into a language which could be used to write histories, treatises on economic theory, and works on biology, chemistry, space technology and international law. But by the time the dialect had absorbed or developed the vast vocabulary and the precision of expression necessary to such writing, it would no longer be a dialect. Along the way, it would have lost the particular flavor of its local culture.

There are those who argue for "the child's right to his own language." That right is not disputed, but supported, here. What is here maintained is that, whatever language is learned natively and by natural imitation, a knowledge of Standard English must be developed to permit the child to exercise another right, that of becoming knowledgeable about the nation and world in which he lives.

Some will ask, "Ah, but the large Spanish-speaking population: why shouldn't it be taught to use Spanish as effectively as others use English?" The answer is that Spanish-speaking people came here to share in the American culture and economy, and to give their children a chance to become unsegregated citizens. Certainly the two most segregative factors are color and language; equally certainly, there is nothing so effective in reducing the segregative tendency of color as an impressively good education, together with fluency in the one universal language of the country. In

January 1974 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (Lau vs. Nichols). This is a legal opinion, but more important for the many children involved, it is a *valid principle*. Without Standard English, an American would be an alien in his own land; he could never enjoy the full privilege of American culture or American citizenship.

TEACHING THE PATTERNS OF WORDS AND SENTENCES

Everyone begins learning language the same way, by imitation. The child, of course, learns as language whatever is spoken regularly around him. The same child will learn the language of the Hottentots or Mandarin Chinese with equal ease if he is in one of those linguistic environments from, say, his first month to his third year. When he utters a "word" or syllable—whether or not he knows what he is doing—there is a joyful response and usually some repetition of the word he has pronounced.

If imitation is the easiest way for the child to learn, it is also the hardest to offset later. Characteristics of a language learned through imitation—the precise tonal qualities of speech—may leave lifelong traces. Further, the longer an attempt to modify these characteristics is delayed, the harder it will be to do so.

As the child begins (in the first grade if not before, let us hope) consciously to develop his knowledge of words and of sentences, he continues to imitate those around him, but he accepts the teacher as his authority. Often—and properly, since the school is his "learning place"—he puts the authority of the teacher above that of his parents. Because the teacher is in such a strategic position to mold the child's language development, every teacher should be an expert language teacher; he is teaching *language* even as he teaches arithmetic, science, art, music, social studies or physical education.

The child accepts the importance of authority, needs it and wants it, especially through the first three or four years of schooling. But he begins to question and reject it when he sees that his teacher—or parent—is wrong or confused, yet still insists on being obeyed. The teacher of language must be able to say, "I think this is the word you should use; let's look in the dictionary to be sure." Authority is not then used as a defensive armor to hide a weakness. It is seen and accepted that the teacher is an intermediary for a higher authority which both accept.

To bolster the mastery of word meanings and basic sentence structures, teachers give what are essentially rote memory assignments. Usually, something like "Learn these five words for tomorrow and use each one in a sentence." The student customarily refers to a dictionary, finds one of the listed definitions—usually the first one given—and makes a sentence. Thus he looks up *incep-*

tion, finds as a first definition, "beginning, start" (*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*. College Edition, 1968), and perhaps writes, "At the inception of the story there is a description of an old house." He has done the assignment, and he may recognize the word if he again sees it soon enough and often enough. This is better than nothing, but not an efficient or satisfying or interesting way to develop his vocabulary.

As a grammatical exercise he may be told that a pronoun agrees with its antecedent in person, number and gender. Example: "If your *sister* wants to go, *she* must be ready on time." The teacher may then direct the student to write a similar sentence using a pronoun and its antecedent. The student may write, "My brother wants a bicycle, so he can ride to the swimming pool." This, too, is better than nothing, though the student may have only a vague notion or none at all of what is meant by person, number or gender. He does what he is told to do, being careful to write only what he can be pretty sure is correct, having learned early that it is better to be right than wrong. At a different level, he may be assigned to write a sentence with a prepositional phrase, and to use his handbook for reference. He finds the section on prepositional phrases, studies the examples and writes, "I want to go to the beach." Has he written one prepositional phrase or two? Unless he has learned about infinitive verbs he may well think he has produced two prepositional phrases.

The point is that rote memory, whether of words or of grammatical rules, is a piecemeal approach. It has the attraction of producing measurable results in a matter of weeks or even days, and when accountability is important there is a strong temptation to use it. Rote memory of words and grammatical structures has, however, two serious disadvantages. It is for most students tedious work which builds knowledge slowly. Also, it fails to produce a sense of the relatedness of the materials learned, and fails to give the kind of satisfaction that one might have from putting a simple puzzle together and seeing a completed picture emerge.

This must not be taken as a blanket opposition to memorization. It is wonderfully satisfying to memorize a favorite poem or anecdote. What child has not felt the thrill of having learned to count, or to recite all of the alphabet in order, or a multiplication table? Memory is an essential ingredient in the playing of games, in the development of an argument, in the telling of one's adventures, indeed in all structures of knowledge. Moreover, even rote memory may sometimes be the best tool the teacher or the student can

command for a part of the learning process. Memorizing combines with and depends upon authority. Appropriately used, memorizing and looking to authority are effective aids for learning language. We must see them as *parts* of a larger process, not as ends in themselves.

Clearly, at some point, the student must begin to understand how language works. There is order in language, and the student should become aware of it. He should also become aware of the inconsistencies in the language.

Most of the words in English are made up of two or more parts, each of which usually contributes something to the meaning. The teacher can move beyond rote memory by showing how compound words are patterned. The word parts are *prefix, stem* and *suffix*. The stem, for those readers who have been away from their school books a long time, is the core of the word, and simple words have only a stem. Thus *heart* has only a stem, but *disheartened* (dis heart en ed) has one prefix, a stem and two suffixes. The *-en* is a verb-forming suffix, that makes a verb out of the noun *heart*, with the meaning "to give heart," "to strengthen" or "encourage." *Dis* is a prefix meaning "apart from" or "away from"; thus to *dishearten* is to reverse the process of giving heart or courage. The final suffix *-ed* makes the past tense of a verb or a participial adjective. Thus: "He did not win the race and this *disheartened* (verb) him." Or, "The *disheartened* (adjective) student may not try so hard the next time."

What is true of words is also true of sentences. There are patterns which occur over and over again.

The simplest, shortest type of sentence is made up of *subject* and *verb*. "Bells ring." "Trees grow." "Birds sing." "Rivers flow." Another short pattern is the *subject, verb, direct object* sentence. "Winter brought cold." "Spring brings showers." "Moisture swells buds." A third pattern includes a *subject, verb* and *indirect object*, such as "She told Grace." "I ask him." A fourth basic pattern includes all of the preceding elements, *subject, verb, indirect object* and *direct object*. "You give me apples." "I ask you a question." "He brings her berries."

The indirect object (dative) differs from the direct object. In the sentence "I throw the dog a bone" the word "dog" is the indirect object, and "bone" is the direct object. One can imagine the bone being thrown and the dog waiting. One does not imagine the dog being thrown and the bone waiting. The direct object is acted

upon; the indirect object has the action done for him.

Two further basic types are the *subject, verb, predicate adjective* sentence, and *subject, verb, predicate noun* sentence. "That looks good" or "This looks better" use predicate adjectives. "Lilies are plants" and "Plants may be trees" use predicate nouns.

These basic sentence patterns may be and usually are expanded by the addition of *articles* (a, an, the), *demonstrative adjectives* (this, that, these, those), or other *pronoun-adjective forms* (anyone's, their, no one's). All of these—articles, demonstratives and pronominal adjectives—are sometimes called *determiners*. Another way of expanding the basic sentence patterns is by the use of *modifiers*—adjectives or adverbs: "*All* lilies are plants." "*Little* boys *earnestly* covet *big* bicycles."

The important thing to know and convey in teaching grammar is that there are patterns, and that these patterns are the basic forms on which sentences are built.

Combinations of the basic patterns may produce *compound sentences* joined by a semicolon (;) or a coordinating conjunction (and, or, but, and the like) into a single sentence. "Winter brought cold; April brings flowers" is an example. Or the basic patterns may be combined into a *complex sentence* in which one part is made dependent on the other by use of a subordinating conjunction (though, if, when, whenever, and the like). "Although all lilies are plants, not all plants are lilies" and "You give me apples, while I give you cherries."

Language by its very nature has patterns. The teacher must be aware of the patterns, and make the students aware of the patterns. As students mature in their awareness of language patterns, they will learn to use them in stories, essays, poetry, musical compositions and scientific treatises. But awareness of patterns is just one step toward mastery of language use. For the knowledge of language to reach its full potential there must also be a process of questioning how the patterns work and why, followed by attempts to use language innovatively while still in the shelter of the classroom. Why do words sometimes have only stems? Why do they sometimes have only a prefix and a stem, or only a stem and a suffix? Why does "the bush has red roses" make sense, but "the rose has red bushes" does not?

THE FUNCTIONS OF WORDS

Grammar is what distinguishes a sentence from a list of words randomly ordered. There are skills involved in the selection of words, the form chosen for them, and the positioning of them in relation to each other. It is these skills, which have probably been mastered by the reader so well they are reflexive, that will be reviewed in this chapter and the next. For anyone who feels he already knows his grammar, the author suggests skipping to page 30. In that chapter is a curriculum proposal.

A discussion of *what* to teach about grammar needs a brief preface on the *how* of teaching grammar. Two important schools of thought on teaching grammar are "traditional" and "transformational." Neither has anything to do with what grammar *is*, but rather with how it should be described or presented. Traditional grammar emphasizes categories of words, phrases and clauses, and analyzes how words fit into these categories. Transformational grammar deals more with deep structure and patterns, the meaning of words, and how changes in meaning can change the function of words. What follows in these pages is not approval of one and disapproval of the other. Either method is good—perhaps equally good—if only the teacher understands the basic principles on which the language is structured. A teacher will fail with either method without a clear understanding of the principles of linguistic structure which make sentences possible. The teacher who does know and understand the basic principles can use any grammatical system that tells the truth about language.

Let us look at those basic principles that underlie *what* is taught.

FIRST PRINCIPLE

There are different word functions.

Some words, called *nouns*, give names to persons, places, things, ideas, processes and states of being. Examples of these six categories, in the same order, are *Ralph, we, she, I; Pittsburgh; bicycle; democracy; development;* and *illness.* (It may be noted that pronouns are included with nouns, since they also serve to name things or persons. Since they serve the same functions as nouns, there is no need to set up a separate category for them.)

Some words, called *verbs*, identify actions, states of being or processes, not as static but as something continuing to take place. Examples of the three categories are *shout* or *write, am* or *seem,*

thrive or *wilt*.

Some words, grouped here as *modifiers*, describe, limit, compare or qualify other words. Within this category are two subgroups, adjectives that modify nouns, and adverbs that modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs. Examples of modifiers that describe are *warm, blue, stubborn;* modifiers that limit are *this, those, her, my;* modifiers that compare are *colder, more, most;* modifiers that qualify are *anxiously, eagerly, tenderly*.

A fourth category of words is *relational* or *functional*. Into this category are put conjunctions that join words, phrases or clauses; prepositions that identify relationships between words, and auxiliary verbs. Examples of conjunctions include *and, but, or, either . . .or, neither. . . nor, if, when, whenever, although*, etc. Examples of prepositions are *in, on, at, under, over, beyond, beside, until*, etc. Examples of auxiliary or helping verbs are *will, shall, can, are* (as in *"are going,"* where its purpose is to assist the verb *going*), *is, am, etc*.

Note again that these categories of words are identified as word *functions*. The word "paper" can function as a noun *(This paper is about as difficult to write as I had anticipated)*, as a verb *(We will paper this room if we can fix the holes in the wall first)*, or as an adjective *(America is not a paper tiger)*. Some grammarians speak or write of "parts of speech." This is workable only if one recognizes that the same word, as it is used in different sentences, may be a different part of speech at different times.

SECOND PRINCIPLE

There are three means by which grammar operates, and by which the functions of words in a sentence may be identified—word order, inflections and relational words.

To take up *word order* first, look at the three lists below.

a	by	numbers	ordered
a	difference	of	sentence
alphabetically	is	of	the
and	letters	or	what
between	list		words

a	by	what	numbers
a	or	words	ordered
of	the	between	sentence
of	and	letters	difference
is	list		alphabetically

what	between	ordered	of
is	a	alphabetically	letters
the	list	or	and
difference	of	by	a
	words	numbers	sentence

How is each list ordered? Which would be easiest to memorize?

The point, of course, is that word order is one of the means through which we give or receive meaning. Word order is one of the three ways of producing meanings or sentences.

The second way to convey meaning is through *inflections*, or the forms of words. Nouns have inflections to show if they are singular or plural, and to show possession. Verbs have inflections to show the third person singular, and to indicate tense. Pronouns have inflections to indicate person, number, and the use of appropriate cases. In some other languages, modifiers are also inflected, and nouns and verbs have many more inflections than occur in English.

Inflections of Nouns

Singular (uninflected)	Singular Possessive	Plural	Plural Possessive
cat	cat's	cats	cats'
mouse	mouse's	mice	mice's
man	man's	men	men's
deer	deer's	deer	deer's
parent	parent's	parents	parents'
people	people's	peoples	peoples'

While the words themselves may have irregular plural forms, the possessive form has a certain consistency. Since mice, men and the second deer are plural forms, the apostrophe comes before the s. People is a collective noun. "The people's choice" is the choice of

one unit of people, e.g., American; "The peoples' choices" would represent different choices by different groups of people, or what the Secretary-General of the United Nations has to cope with to earn his daily bread.

Inflections of Verbs

go	goes	went	gone
ride	rides	rode	ridden
sit	sits	sat	sat
set	sets	set	set
lie	lies	lay	lain
lay	lays	laid	laid
want	wants	wanted	wanted

The first column is for all persons and numbers except the third person singular. The second column is the third person singular inflection. The third column is the past tense inflection, which is the same for all persons and numbers. The last column is the past or perfect participle inflection, the form used to make the perfect tenses for all persons and numbers.

While there are irregular forms, they occur mostly in words that are learned in early childhood. Also learned early is the more elaborate set of inflections for the verb to be. Present tense—I am; you are; he, she, it is; we are; you are; they are. Past tense—I was; you were; he, she, it was; we were; you were; they were. Past or perfect participle—I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they have been; will have been.

Inflections of Pronouns

	First Person Singular	First Person Plural	Second Person Sing.&Pl.	Third Person Singular	Third Person Plural
subjective	I	we	you	he, she, it	they
possessive	my	our	your	his, her, its	their
indirect objective	me	us	you	him, her, it	them
direct objective	me	us	you	him, her, it	them

Because the indirect and direct objective case forms are alike, some grammarians combine them, calling all forms simply the ob-

jective case. This is unfortunate, since the relationships of the noun or pronoun to the verb or another noun or pronoun are different. In "Kiss *him* for *me*," *him* is direct object and *me* is indirect object. In "Kiss *me* for *him*," *me* is the direct object and *him* is the indirect object. In the following sentences the italicized word is in the indirect objective case; the capitalized words are direct objects:

Tell *me* a STORY.
She gave her *mother* a PRESENT.
Give the *devil* his DUE.
I tell *you*, you are wrong.

The last sentence has no direct object. "Wrong" is a predicate adjective; the second "you" is the subject of the second verb (are).

The principle, then, is that inflections are one means of showing grammatical or structural relationships. Inflections, combined with word order and often with relational or functional words, control meaning.

The third way to convey meaning is through *relational words* which help identify the relationships of other words. While a word like "paper," whether it is used as a noun, adjective or verb, has approximately the same meaning (a thin sheet of fibrous material), words like "for" and "in" can have many meanings. What is the meaning of "for" in these phrases: "for you," "for an hour," "for once?" What is the meaning of "in" in these phrases: "in a minute," "in that instance," "in a box," "in a hurry," "in all justice?"

The value of relational words can best be realized by looking at some sentences without them:

"Boy goes store." (Does he go into, to, from, around, past, over, under the store?)

"Boy goes store buy flour his mother bake cookies." (*If* the boy goes *to* the store *to* buy flour his mother *will* bake cookies. Or another possibility: *Although* the boy goes *to* the store *to* buy flour his mother *will not* bake cookies. Still another: *Even if* the boy goes *to* the store *to* buy flour his mother *may not* bake cookies.)

"We study principles structure we see grammar is interesting." (*As* we study the principles *of* structure we see *that* grammar is interesting. *If* we *do* study the principles *of* structure we *may* see *that* grammar is interesting. *Since* we *are about to* study the principles *of* structure we *may* see *whether* grammar is interesting.)

The reader may have noticed that one word has been ignored so far: namely, *the* is used in some sentences and is not definitely

called a relational word. Sometimes—as in "the boy goes to the store," it seems to add no necessary meaning at all. (Just filling air holes.) It is *not* relational in its function. It may be there merely as a matter of linguistic habit. Some languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean have no such word at all. On the other hand, if I say *"The* reason for my treating it ambiguously. . ." I suggest that there was only one reason for doing so. If I say "*A* reason for my treating. . ." I suggest that there are others. In such instances *the* and *a* and *an* become important limiting modifiers.

Similarly, the verb *to be* is sometimes essential to meaning and sometimes not. (The Russian language uses it only when it is considered to be necessary.) In "Whatever *is* is right," the first *is*, at least, is necessary; the other may not be (and in Russian would be omitted).

This, then, is the principle reviewed in this chapter: Words have either lexical or grammatical functions.

1.) The lexical functions are of four kinds:
   a. nouns
   b. verbs
   c. modifiers
   d. relational (or functional, or structural) words
2.) The grammatical functions are of three kinds:
   a. word order
   b. inflections
   c. relational words

Now that these principles have been reviewed, we can go on to review the next, and basically the last, part of grammar: the kinds of relationships that make the English language what it is, relationships that the effective speaker or writer uses and that the informed listener or reader recognizes.

MAKING SENTENCES

The clarity of a sentence, and the beauty and persuasiveness of it, depend on choices its author makes in three areas—mode, structure, and relationships.

Mode

There are four reasons for saying something: to tell, to ask, to command and to exclaim. These four purposes are expressed through four different modes: the *declarative* sentence, which declares or tells; the *interrogative* sentence, which asks a question; the *imperative* sentence, which gives a command; and the *exclamatory* sentence, which most often is only a few words, and which usually does not, but may, have the formal structure of a sentence.

Examples:

Declarative

Birds often sing in the early morning.

I doubt that, on a cold, drizzly morning when most of us feel like staying indoors, reading, tinkering, or huddled around a fire, we would be likely to be listening for the song of a bird.

You ask me whether I want to go out in such weather, and I say emphatically, "No, absolutely not!"

He asked, "Do you want to go out?" to which I replied, "No."

Note that even though doubt is implied in the second example, and an exclamation is inserted in the last sentence, and questions in the last two sentences, the impact of each is to make a statement. All of the examples are declarative. The large majority of all sentences are declarative.

Interrogative

Do you want to go out?

I said I didn't want to go out; didn't you hear me?

Do you understand that I don't want to do it?

Will you please close the door?

Will you please close that door!

The second and third sentences contain declarative elements, but their overall purpose is to ask a question. The last two sentences could be called interrogative (on the basis of form) or imperative (on the basis of purpose) or both. The last sentence could also be called exclamatory (on the basis of force) or all three at once (on all three bases).

Imperative

Close the door (please).

Tell me again what it is you are trying to say.

Son, don't do that!

Characteristic of the imperative sentence is the direct address. Its subject is the usually unspoken "you," which is understood and therefore unnecessary. Even when a noun is used, as in the last example, the "you" is implied: "Son, don't you do that!"

Exclamatory

Ouch!

Never!

Close the door!

I didn't say that!

Note that the exclamation is a short, emotional outburst. Note, too, that it may be either a word or two without the structure of a sentence (no subject, no verb), or it may be declarative *and* exclamatory (as in "I didn't say that!"), imperative *and* exclamatory ("Close the door!"). Longer sentences may be exclamatory, but to be effective they must make their exclamatory nature clear from the beginning and maintain emphasis. "Listen, friend, what I said was no, and what I mean is no, and you'd better not forget it!" Exclamatory literally says that something is in the nature of shouting out. Clearly, one may "shout out" a short declarative sentence or question or command, but long sentences rarely work very well as exclamations.

Structure

Modern grammarians rarely speak of simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences. Instead, they speak of sentences and embedded sentences. By whatever name they are called, sentence structures have certain *principles* which are easy to state and illustrate.

Three ways of expressing the first principle are these:

A sentence has a subject and a predicate.

A sentence has a subject element and a verb element.

A sentence has a noun phrase and a verb phrase.

The second principle is that two or more sentences may remain independent, but be combined into one sentence simply by joining them together. The "joiners" are the semi-colon and coordinating conjunctions, such as *and, or, but, either. . .or, neither. . .nor.* These combined clauses are called compound sentences.

The third principle is that two or more sentences may be combined in such a way that one of them depends on the other, or is "dependent" or "subordinate." A few subordinating conjunctions are these: *if, when, whenever although,* and such conjunctive phrases as *to which, of which, of all that.* It should be noted that the relationship between clauses or simple sentences is a matter of degree rather than absolute.

coordinate clauses	He went to the movies; she stayed home. He went to the movies and she stayed home. He went to the movies but she stayed home.

Now look at the different results using subordinating conjunctions:

subordinate clauses	He went to the movies while she stayed home. He went to the movies because she stayed home. He went to the movies whenever she stayed home.

One might even comment that the sentences become more dependent in proportion as the relationship between the "he" and the "she" becomes worse.

A fourth principle is that there is no theoretical limit to the number of clauses that may be united into a single sentence, and, in practice, much excellent writing includes numbers of carefully combined dependent and independent clauses. One familiar example is the opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence:

1. When in the course of human events it becomes necessary
for one people to dissolve the political bands
2. which have connected them with another
3. and (it becomes necessary) to assume among the powers of
the earth the separate and equal station
4. to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle
them
5. a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires
6. that they should declare the causes
7. which impel them to the separation.

This is a complex sentence, having only one independent clause (5). The compound-complex sentence has at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause. These may be

short or long. Example: *She likes to swim and she goes to the pool every day.* EVEN WHEN THERE IS A COLD WIND BLOWING. The italicized clauses are independent; the capitalized clause is dependent.

Relationships

While being able to identify dependent and independent clauses is important, it is somewhat of a parlor trick compared to what is really essential—being able to join clauses into effective combinations. The rest of this section will examine nine components that determine the effectiveness of the choices made in word order, inflection and relational words. The nine components are *number, gender, person, case, tense, voice, mood, modification* and *comparison.*

1. *Number* is simply the distinction of singular or plural among nouns, pronouns and verbs. English has both weak and strong (or regular and irregular) means for showing number in nouns and pronouns:

Weak (Regular)		Strong (Irregular)	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
house	houses	mouse	mice
car	cars	goose	geese
hero	heroes	woman	women
onion	onions	he, she, it	they

For showing number in verbs the language has a special form only for the third person singular, aside from the distinctive form of the irregular verb *to be.* It is practical simply to regard the third person singular as a special inflected form: go (goes), stand (stands), see (sees). Of course, *to be* is irregular in the singular: I *am,* you *are,* he, she, it *is.*

2. *Gender* in English is natural. (Some languages base gender on the form of the word, i.e., have grammatical gender.) The four natural genders are masculine, feminine, neuter and common, the last category being collective words which by their nature include both male and female, and perhaps neuter. *People, persons, group, mob* are common gender words. The identification, then, is based on the relationship to life or to nature. But note that *it* may be used where there *is* gender (sex), when the gender is not a matter of importance: "Where is your dog?" "It's in the back yard." (In this instance the gender could become important if the dog is in heat and there is no fence around the yard.)

The selection of pronouns is based on gender in order to keep references clear:

As Meg and Harry walked along, *he* swung *his* book back and forth.

She watched *it* as an excuse to look at *him*.

My physics teacher was good; *she* was also pretty.

The *Adirondack* was a good ship. *She*. . .(ships are generally referred to with the feminine pronoun even when they have non-feminine names, giving rise to such odd-looking news stories as this Associated Press release: "At age 10, she is retiring. Bidding 'ciao' to the Statue of Liberty, the sleek, white Italian luxury liner *Michelangelo* has begun her last trip home.")

3. *Person* is a means of keeping references among people and things clear. The three "persons" are the first (I, me, we, us and nouns in apposition or agreement with one of these); the second (you, and any noun in direct address such as "Fortune, smile upon me now" in which Fortune is a second person noun); and the third (all nouns, common and proper, except in direct address or when in apposition to a first or second person noun or pronoun). It may help to think of the person relationship in terms of a circle, with a smaller circle as center:

3rd: spoken about

Note that person may shift in regard to an individual or thing, but does so in a way that keeps relationships understandable: *Henry* (3rd) said to *me* (1st): "*I* (Henry becomes 1st person) wouldn't do that if *I* (still Henry, 1st person) were *you* (refers to *me* which here shifts to 2nd person)."

4. *Case* identifies the relationships of a noun or pronoun to a verb, or to another noun or pronoun. The four standard cases in English are subjective, for the subject of a verb; possessive, showing ownership of one noun by another noun, or by a pronoun; indirect objective, applied to the indirect object of a verb, or to the object of a preposition; and direct objective, showing the direct object of a verb.

Examples:

Subjective—	"*I* think. . ."; "*Glen* works. . ."; "The *majority* of those present believe. . ."
Possessive—	"*Her* attitude. . ."; ". . .the *dawn's* early light. . ."; "In regard to *their* proposal. . ."
Indirect objective—	"Tell *me* a story about. . ."; "To *him* who in the *love* of *nature* holds communion with her visible *forms,* she speaks a various language. . ."; "I gave my *sister* a quick look."
Direct objective—	"I gave my sister a quick *look.*" "Of all the stories I have read, I like *that* best." "That is the one *which* I like best."

A fifth case, rarely identified anymore in English grammars, is actually used quite often: the case of *direct address,* sometimes called the *vocative.* "Friend, will you. . ."; "Mother, please. . ." While no different form of the noun appears, the relationship is clearly different from any of those in the standard four cases.

5. *Tense* refers to time, and with the use of helping or auxiliary forms, a complex set of time relationships is possible—and is in fact commonly used. (Some "modern" grammarians speak of English as having only two tenses, present and past. This is because there are only two forms of the verbs themselves, except for irregular verbs, such as *go, went, gone; see, saw, seen.)* Tense is the grammatical device by which time-relationships are established, not in terms of calendar or clock, but in terms of the whens, thens and nows of the speaker or writer. "Caesar, about a half century before Christ's birth, wrote, 'I came, I saw, I conquered.' " *Wrote* tells us that the *speaker* was looking back on Caesar's times; *came, saw, conquered* tell us that *Caesar* was looking back upon his own activities.

Tenses are formed by inflection, and the use of function-words.

The simple present is the most flexible of the tenses. In addition to the basic reference to the time of the speaking or writing, it may reach so far into the past and future as virtually to encompass all time. An example is the sentence "The earth revolves around the

sun." This is clearly the present, but it refers to an action which goes on over an indefinitely long range of centuries. The present tense may also be used for what is a distinctly future reference: "He is going to Europe next summer." Or, in what is called the "historical present," it may be used for past action: "The fisherman *stands* for a moment looking out over the swirls and still pools of the stream. Then he *casts* his line. For a moment the bright feather *touches* the water; then it *skips* like a helpless insect trying to raise a wet wing once again into the dry air." Not only is some unwary fish being deceived; the reader is being made to put himself back into the past to see it as if it were present; this is a standard literary use of the present tense. Note that in the foregoing examples, there are two sets of relationships being established. One is the relationship of time in reference to *now* or to some *then* which may be either defined or left vague; the other is a grammatical adherence of the verb to established tense-patterns.

When we use verbs in a shifting time-sequence, it is important that we relate them to one another so that the shift of time is reasonable. "I shall see tomorrow what I shall never see" violates reason in that both time-references put us in the future, although the second future denies the reality of the first. ". . .what I shall never see *again,*" on the other hand, does not violate reason. Good writing demands that the connection of one time or tense with another in a sentence or in a sequence of sentences be understandable, and represent some possible actual time situation.

The past tense refers to some previous time, or, in a general way, to what has gone before. The past perfect also refers backward, either specifically or generally, and then refers backward from *that* time. When you say "The problems *had been solved,*" you put the solution *before* some time, specified or not, which is already in the past, and you leave open the possibility that new factors may have since been introduced which bring the need for a new and different solution. In the discussion of the present tense, we saw that the continuing present, or present progressive, ("He is going to Europe this summer") could introduce what was actually a future meaning. In the past tense, the progressive form also has a distinct use in addition to the setting forth of a continuation of action. "He *was going,* but he has changed his mind" does not suggest that he was in the process of going, but rather that he *intended* to go. Here the relationship is certainly one of time (the intention existed prior to now), but it is also a relationship of purpose or intention to actuality.

The future tense looks forward to some time after now. ("He will send the box." "They shall not pass.") The future perfect looks forward to some future time *before* which an action is completed. ("Congress *will have adjourned* before that bill can come up for a vote.") The same future perfect meaning, with the same tense-construction, may be achieved without specific time reference. ("Congress will have adjourned without voting on the bill.") The completed action referred to in both sentences is the adjournment. The implied "before which" is the time at which the vote would be taken.

Time, in the world as we know it and live in it, is translated into tense in the composition of sentences.

Within the sentence and in a sequence of sentences, tenses relate to one another. The control of these sequences is one important skill of the good writer.

6. *Voice* identifies an active or passive relationship among a doer, a verb and the thing done. In the *active* voice the *subject* of the verb does the *action: He throws* the ball." "A *man said* to his neighbor, 'Sir, *I like* your fence.' " In the active voice there may or may not be a direct object for the verb. *"Children play."* "The *sun is shining*."

The *passive* voice is sometimes called an inferior form, *one that should be avoided* (a passive voice clause). No such recommendation *would be made* (passive) by anyone who has examined the best literature in the English language with an eye to active and passive structures:

Shakespeare:

"...*that* looks on tempests and *is never shaken*..."

"...whose worth's unknown, although his *height be taken*."

"If this be error and upon me *proved*..."

(From: "Let me not to the marriage of true minds/Admit impediments")

Emerson:

"...millions...cannot always *be fed* on...foreign harvests..."

(From: "The American Scholar")

Faulkner:

"...as if *he...had been caught*...

(From: "Barn Burning")

The examples *could be multiplied* (passive) a thousand times over. In simple truth the passive voice (as with any other form, when well used) is an important part of effective and beautiful use of language.

The elements that form the active voice can sometimes be transformed into the passive voice. "People use language" becomes "Language is used by people." "My wife baked cookies" becomes "Cookies were baked by my wife." *Only sentences with a transitive verb and a direct object can be transformed into the passive.* But suppose we don't know *who* or *what* did the action. We can't say, "eat rice," without implying an imperative sentence or a crossword puzzle clue. We can say, "Rice is eaten." The passive voice allows us to omit the agent or doer of the action—and often we do not know the agent, or, even if we know, prefer not to identify him. Shakespeare's image would have lost its excellence had he written of love as a star "whose worth we don't know because no navigator has taken its height." Let's give the passive voice its due and teach it as a standard form to be used, but (like any other form) to be used appropriately and well.

7. *Mood* indicates how near, or how far, a statement is from being a positive assertion. Mood can indicate a statement of fact, or it can introduce an idea of wondering or pondering, or it can suppose what might happen under other circumstances. If the mood indicates a simple assertion, it is indicative; if it introduces *if, when* or *whenever* conditions, it is the conditional mood; and if it supposes what might occur under other conditions, it is the subjunctive mood.

Examples:

Indicative—It is raining.

Conditional—Whenever it rains, the basement leaks.

Subjunctive—If it were raining I would read, but since it isn't, let's go for a walk.

Mood is revealed in two ways—through the form or inflection of the verb and its associated words, and through the meaning of the verb. All verbs in one sentence may be of the same mood, or they may not; each must be considered separately. "*If* birds sing. . ." "*Whenever* birds sing. . ." In each of these a functional word is used, each of which carries a denial that birds sing all the time, and therefore—though they do, in general, sing—they may not be singing *now*. The present tense function of *sing* in an absolute sense is brought into question, though it remains in a general sense. This is the *conditional* mood. Some grammarians ignore the conditional mood, preferring only to note the existence of *if, when, whenever* clauses, or simply calling them a part of the indicative mood. The point here is that there *is* a difference in the force given the verb, and it would be well to recognize it.

Some grammarians also deny the importance of the *subjunctive* mood. At least one has claimed that it no longer exists for practical purposes in English.

The subjunctive is a set of constructions whose purpose is to express conditions contrary to fact. Observe the illustration already given for the subjunctive: "If it were raining I would read, but since it isn't, let's go for a walk." The subjunctive uses a *past tense* form of the verb, but the time or tense reference is *not* past. Indeed, any use of a verb form other than the standard tense and person expected in a normal indicative sentence or clause is a trademark of the subjunctive. Denial of the verbal implication, or doubt cast on it is also characteristic. "If this *be* treason. . ." implies "It is not treason in my mind, but it may be in yours. . ." The use of the infinitive form stresses the denial or doubt. This certainly produces a relationship to "fact" which differs from the indicative "this is treason," or the conditional "if this is treason."

There are auxiliary verbs that control mood. These are *can* or *could, shall* or *should, will* or *would, may* or *might,* (owe) or *ought,* and *must.*

"I *can go"* is indicative.

"I *could go* if I had my work done." This has the past tense form with present or future meaning—characteristic of the subjunctive, with a condition, or more often, a doubt.

"I *could go* if I had my work done, but I don't." This is clearly a denial, also characteristic of the subjunctive.

"I *shall go"* and "I *will go"* are indicative future tense.

"I *should go. . ."* or "I *would go. . ."* are subjunctive. The past tense form clearly refers to the present or future, and both introduce doubt or denial. But in "I said I *would go,"* the "would go" could be simple past tense.

"I *may go"* and "I *must go"* are indicative.

"I *might go"* and "I *ought to go"* are subjunctive, using past tense forms with present or future meaning, and introducing doubt.

Owe is identified as the present tense form from which *ought* derives. But *owe* has another past form, *owed,* and neither *owe* nor *owed* is a modal (mood controlling) auxiliary. *Ought* is.

Must is an emphatic auxiliary which lacks the subjunctive past tense form.

8. *Modification,* literally the act of making or creating a manner, refers to putting into a bare-bones statement words, phrases or clauses that describe or limit or otherwise give that basic state-

ment or some part of it the exact quality desired.

Modifiers may be divided into *adjectives*, which modify nouns or pronouns, and *adverbs*, which modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs.

"He eats pancakes" has no modification.

"He eats *many* pancakes" and "He eats *many big* pancakes" use adjective modifiers.

"He *often* eats pancakes" and "He eats pancakes *for breakfast*" use adverb modifiers.

Modification is the art of molding what you have to say to achieve an effect, using factors which describe, limit, direct and apply the meaning. The relationship of the modifier to what is modified must not merely be discoverable on careful search, but so apparent that the mind of the reader does not need to be given over directly to the search for that relationship.

Note the difference in these sentences:

John is *only* your friend; sometimes he wants you to know that he...

John is your *only* friend; sometimes he wants you to know that he...

John is your friend, *only* sometimes he wants you to know that he...

John is your friend; sometimes *only* he wants you to know that he...

John is your friend; sometimes he *only* wants you to know that he...

John is your friend; sometimes he wants *only* you to know that he...

John is your friend; sometimes he wants you *only* to know that he...

John is your friend; sometimes he wants you to know *only* that he...

John is your friend; sometimes he wants you to know that *only* he...

Phrases and clauses also need to be placed carefully. Note the difference between "The cat *in the coalbin* has black feet" and *"In the coalbin* the cat has black feet." Or the difference between *"When I have the leisure,* I think of going to sea" and "I think of going to sea *when I have the leisure."*

There is a difference apart from that of directly and clearly controlled denotation. "My crotchety old uncle met me at the train" gives the same facts as "My uncle, old and crotchety, met me at

the train," yet the second sentence gives a much more favorable impression of the uncle. The art of choosing and placing modifiers is essential to good writing. The misplacement of modifiers is one of the signs of careless or bad writing.

9. *Comparison* is a device for applying varying degrees of the same modification to different things. It has three standard forms:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
hot	hotter	hottest
easy	easier	easiest
terrible	more terrible	most terrible
friendly	more friendly	most friendly
friendly	friendlier	friendliest

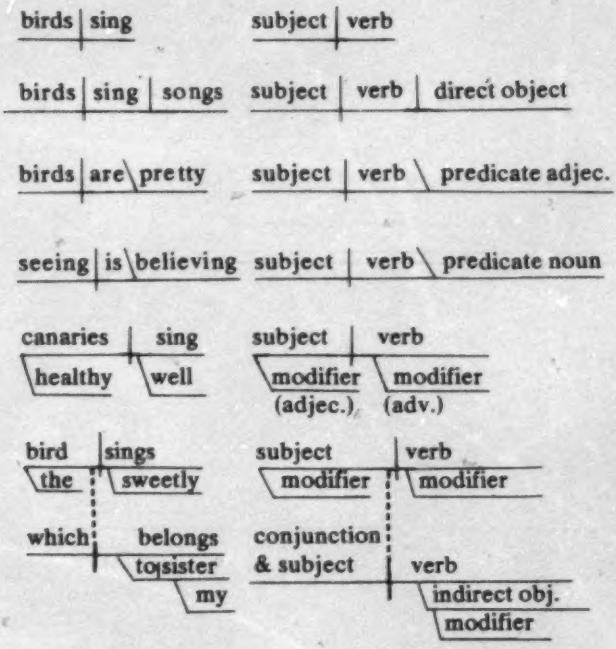
These are ordinarily mastered very early. Yet it may be worth calling to attention that although English has only the positive and the two inflected forms (-er, -est) plus the "more" and "most" forms, the actual possibilities of comparison are virtually endless. Think, for example of a row of ten apples, selected and arranged so that at the left end is a completely rotten one, near the middle is the one that is ripe to perfection, and at the right end is one that is too green to be edible. As we go from left to right, each apple is greener than the one before it. As we go from right to left, each one is successively riper. As we go from either end toward the middle, each one is better than the one before it. But note that while the apple second from either end is better than the one at the end, it is still not "good," and that the "best" of the first three is less good than the middle ones. Thus "better" or "best" may be less than "good." In this way the comparative forms make possible degrees of comparison far richer, far more complex and effective than would seem to be implied with only three standard grammatical forms. We may also, of course, compare things by *description*, without the use of the comparative forms: "The tall, slim man is too quiet, giving the effect of a powder keg about to explode. The short one is noisy."

There are many refinements to the principles of grammar set forth in the foregoing pages.

Consider the sentence "Seeing is believing." *Seeing* is the gerundive form of the verb *to see*. A gerund is a word which is both verb and noun—the noun form dominates grammatically, so it stands here properly as the subject of a verb, though it still implies the action of a verb. *Is* is a verb. *Believing* is also a gerund. In effect we have a sentence made up of three verbs, yet also having a subject, a verb and a predicate noun. "To see is to believe" is similar except

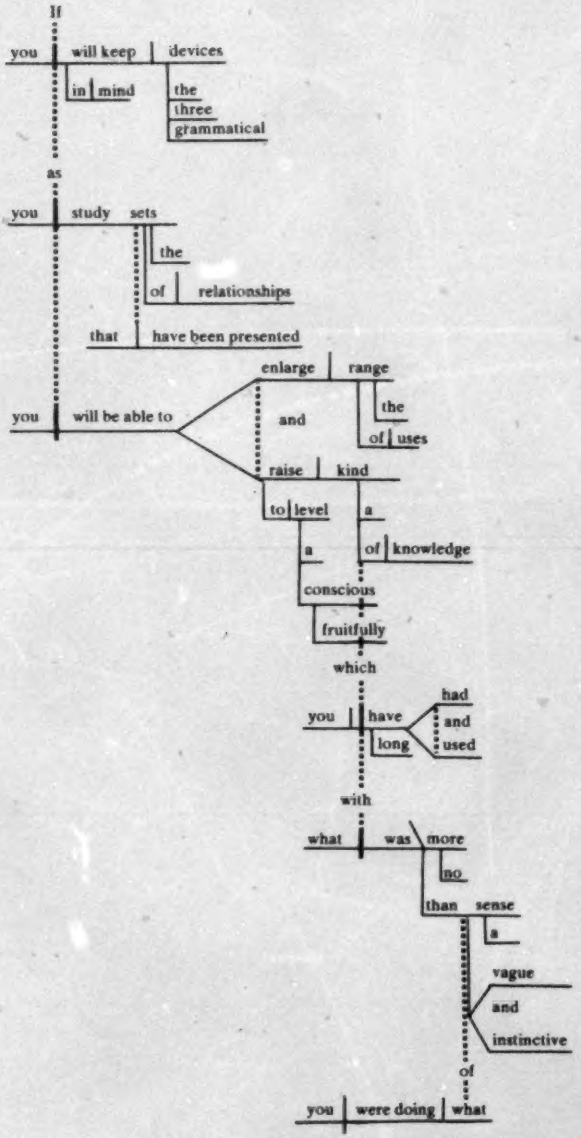
that it has infinitive verbs, instead of gerunds, to function as nouns.

In some instances, a diagram of the components of a sentence helps to understand how the components function. Diagrams are useful for showing case, modification and voice (in that cases change in the active-passive transformation) but they are not useful for analyzing number, gender, person, tense, mood or comparison. Since case and modification offer serious difficulties to many students, it is worthwhile to be able to give visual reinforcement to explanations of these two sets of relationships. Here are examples of simple diagramming:



The "which" in the dependent clause of the last sentence could also be called a pronominal conjunction, or a relative pronoun. In like manner, the "to my sister" could also be called an adverbial modifying phrase. The whole clause "which belongs to my sister" is an adjective clause modifying the noun "bird."

On the following page is a diagram of a complex sentence, in which are illustrated all of the cases and a variety of modifying words, phrases, and clauses: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and
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no
than
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vague
and
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of
you
were doing
what

33

If the precise details of diagramming here presented differ from those the reader is accustomed to, the reader should feel free to change them. The exact form is not sacred. The use of some effective visual aid is what is important. Partly for reasons of space limitation, and partly because the proponents of transformational analysis have not been able to agree on the best way to illustrate their ideas, no attempt is made here to include transformational trees. The transformational tree can be helpful for some aspects of sentence analysis, and should be used if and when it is understood, to clarify and reinforce instruction.

The elements of grammar covered in these chapters apply to all Standard English, whether written or spoken. Punctuation applies only to written language, where it serves to replace the uses of the voice and of pauses to show relationships. Space does not allow the presentation here of all the uses of punctuation. Handbooks of English grammar do, however, give this special subject the detailed treatment necessary.

A CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

It is vitally important for the Standard English teaching program to be well articulated from early elementary years through high school. The natural progression begins with the most basic words and sentences necessary for classroom routines and activities, and adds both words and sentence structures as subject matters are introduced.

In the *first and second grades,* while emphasis is on learning phonics and reading, the teacher should use all of the basic sentence patterns, and should make frequent occasions to write them on the blackboard, using different colors of chalk, underlining, script, block letters, and parentheses to create a code system so as to distinguish consistently subject (S), verb (V), direct object (dO), indirect object (iO), predicate noun (pn), predicate adjective (pa), modifiers (M), and relational or functional words such as prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs and other words whose purpose is grammatical rather than lexical (R).

Grammatical terms may be used sometimes, but the *pattern* is the essential thing at this point. As the patterns become familiar through sight as well as sound, exercises in changing the words may be introduced:

The (M) *bird* (S) SINGS (V).
The (M) *robin* (S) FLIES (V).
Who (S) SINGS (V)?
We (S) SING (V) *songs* (dO).

By the end of the first grade the children should recognize that there are different uses in a sentence for different kinds of words, and should be able to substitute words at every point in sentences of the subject-verb, subject-verb-direct object, subject-verb-predicate adjective, and subject-verb-predicate noun types. By the end of second grade they should be able to recognize the subject-verb-indirect object and subject-verb-direct object sentences as well as the others, and should be able to create sentences of every type, at least with the aid of a visual pattern. Whatever visual device is used to mark the different functions should be used throughout the first and second years, and at the beginning of the third year.

In addition to these basic sentence patterns, easy compound words should also be shown, probably beginning with the ordinal numbers fourth, fifth, sixth, etc., and the cardinals thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, etc. But other easy prefixes and suffixes should be shown, too, in each case with comparison of uses, e.g.: He (S)

WAS (V) (quick) (pa). He (S) RAN (V) quickly (M). She (S) IS (V) (careful) (pa.) She (S) RUNS (V) carefully (M). I (S) TIE (V) my (M) *shoe* (dO). I (S) UNTIE (V) my (M) *shoe* (dO). The teacher may talk about prefixes and suffixes incidentally, but at this stage the important thing is to develop an awareness of the patterns of words at an early level. The child's linguistic growth is mainly through imitation, curbed by authority, in preparation for the understanding which will soon become a part of the child's education.

For the children of other than Standard English background this basic structural approach may be used comparatively, i.e., given in the child's native language or dialect and directly compared to Standard English whenever the teacher has the necessary knowledge.

The teacher should not avoid using more complex sentences and words where they come naturally or are part of a story or lesson. We are not here suggesting limits on the general use of language. It is desirable to *use* language normally and freely even a step beyond what is clearly and fully understood by the children. But it is necessary to prepare the way for understanding what is to come. For this the short, basic sentences are best.

The *third grade* should begin with a review of structures of words and sentences that is based on the work of the first two years. Then the visual marks of distinction for the function forms should be gradually eliminated—first, the subject-verb distinction, then the predicate adjective and predicate noun, then the direct object, the indirect object and the relational words. Modifiers should continue to be marked distinctively (because they will offer the most complexity) until the other forms can be recognized consistently. *This removal of distinctive colors or markings should be gradual.* The grammatical names should be introduced before the distinctive marks are abandoned, and exercises should be given with each function form until it is mastered before the next function form is introduced without distinctive marks. In sentence structure the goal of the third grade should be to replace recognition by coded forms with recognition by names, for *all* of the basic one-clause sentence forms.

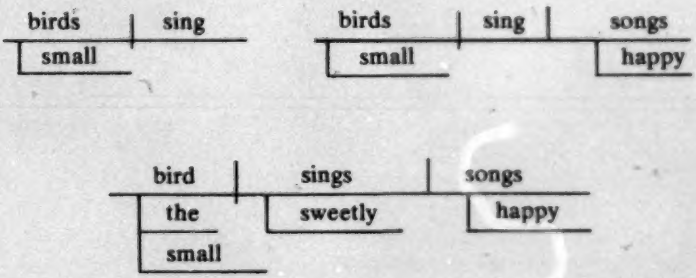
In vocabulary study, more prefixes and suffixes should be taught, e.g., *re-*: *re*read, *re*turn, *re*do, etc.; *in-*: *in*side, *in*to, *in*sect (*sect* comes from a Latin word meaning "cut," shows how an insect has a sharp division—a "cut-in" between head and body), etc. Suffixes might include *-er:* work*er*, teach*er*, read*er*, etc.; *-able:*

eat*able*, read*able*, eras*able*, etc. (and note that, as suffix, -able usually means able to be done*: eatable = able to be eaten; readable = able to be read; erasable = able to be erased).

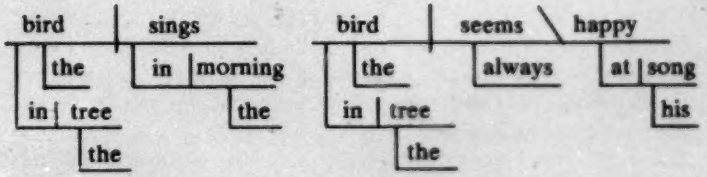
Exercises should be used to give practice, both in sentence structures and in the use of prefixes and suffixes. The knowledge involved in these processes is necessary to the child's continued growth.

The *fourth grade* should begin with a review of all of these processes. When it is clear that the structure of basic sentence forms is known and that the parts can be used and named, modifiers should be introduced gradually, e.g., at first for the subject, then for the direct object, then for the verb, then for the predicate noun and predicate adjective and finally for the indirect object.

At this point the diagram should be used as a visual aid:



When this much is mastered so that the children can properly show the modifying relationships of one-word modifiers, phrase modifiers should be introduced:



*In more advanced vocabulary study some words will have -able in an active sense, i.e., stable (Latin STA + able) means "able to stand," *not* "able to be stood."

Many such exercises should be used. They should be used until the relationship of modifier to the noun or verb it modifies is clearly recognized. This knowledge of modification is a necessary step for the learning which is to come in the fifth grade. Sentences with this kind of structure should be drawn from the reading which the pupils are doing, and from their own writing. Sentences written by the children should be put on the board for the class to add modification (with the teacher's help when necessary).

Word parts should begin to receive more emphasis. Stems (or roots or bases) should be introduced and a variety of affixes used with them, e.g., TRACT = to pull, the stem for exTRACT, deTRACT, conTRACT, proTRACT, disTRACT; exTRACTion, exTRACTable, TRACTion, deTRACTion, disTRACTing, etc. The teacher should take time to explain each word, showing just what each prefix and each suffix does to build a meaning that is based on the stem. The teacher should do this with several stems, such as MOVE, MOT, MOB (all mean "move"); FAC, FIC, FACT, FECT, FICT (all from Latin FACere to make or do); SPEC, SPIC, SPECT (from the Latin SPECere, to see), etc. Using a dictionary—Skeat's *Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* is excellent for adult beginners—the teacher should prepare board work to present once every week or two. Lists of prefixes, stems and suffixes in separate columns make a good exercise for students to put together, but the teacher should go over with them the words they have assembled. In the fourth grade vocabulary development needs to begin a rapid expansion, and this analytical method is the best single method for doing it, since stems are used from several to hundreds of times, and the affixes hundreds of times in words the students will soon need to know. Word games of other sorts should of course also be used.

The teacher should not keep his own language on the limited level at which the youngsters are learning. One's early formal development of *knowledge* nearly always is a step—sometimes a long step—behind the teacher's and his own *use* of language.

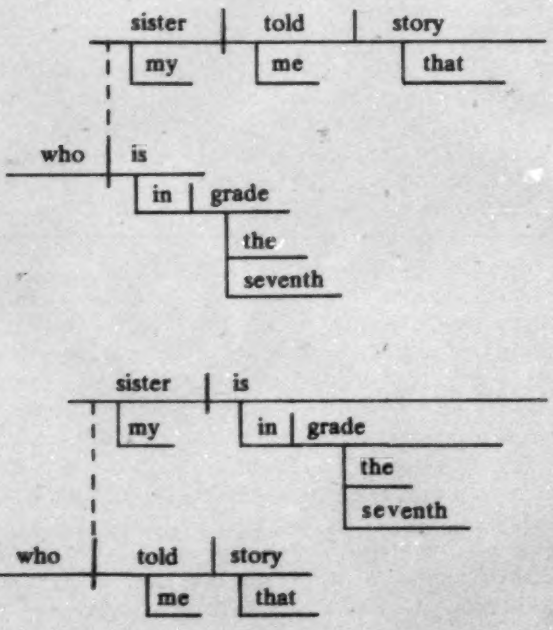
The *fifth grade* should begin with a review of basic sentence forms, first without modifiers, then with one-word modifiers and finally with phrase modifiers. Diagrams of these forms should be used as visual aids to reinforce awareness of relationships. Words, especially those with prefixes and suffixes that have been taught, should also be reviewed. The reviews should of course include some actual sentences and words that have been taught, but should also add new sentences and words with the same patterns

and affixes. Some review should be used whenever necessary throughout the year.

Words and sentences should more and more often be drawn from reading and from the students' writing. As a general rule, whenever a word or sentence that is encountered in reading seems not to be thoroughly understood, an analysis is in order. These analytical processes will make it possible to achieve a fuller understanding of good literature, and good literature is far more effective in meeting and expanding interest than are stories that have been written down to the children's supposed language level.

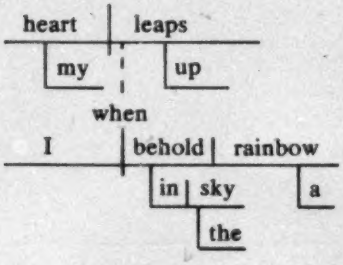
Formal instruction in sentence patterns should now begin to include modifying clauses (embedded sentences). The diagram is again an important visual aid. Examples:

"My sister told me that story." "She is in the seventh grade." These two sentences may become one: "My sister, who is in the seventh grade, told me that story." Or: "My sister, who told me that story, is in the seventh grade."



The combining of two short sentences into one is an essential skill for good writing. Examples should be used until there is a full understanding of the process and a realization of how a sentence (which then becomes a clause) may be used to modify *any* appropriate part of another sentence.

Compound sentences from reading should be diagrammed, and also divided into the sentences from which they were combined:



Here we clearly have two sentences:
"My heart leaps up." "I behold a rainbow in the sky." The *when* clause is adverbial, modifying *leaps* (telling when the leaping takes place).

Longer sentences, with three or more clauses, should be analyzed if students ask about them, or if they are difficult to understand, though the responsibility for learning, at this stage, should center on the two-clause combinations.

Word analysis should continue. There will be an ample source of compound words in the reading, and these should be a center of attention. But some grammatical terms should be analyzed too, e.g.: prePOSITion (that which) (is put or placed) (before)—and note that prepositions do come before their objects: *on* the table, *for* me, *to* school, etc.; conJUNCTion (that which) (joins) (together). The teacher should point out that we speak of pencil *and* paper (joining nouns): the dog ran *and* jumped (joining verbs): I like to swim *but* he likes to play baseball (joining clauses or sentences); etc. It is time also to know that a comPOUND word is a word that is (put) (together), that a preFIX is (attached or hooked on) (before), while a sufFIX is (attached) (behind). The *suf* is a combining form of Latin *sub* which means "under"—subMARine (belonging or going) (under) (the sea).

The fifth grade teacher will know that a goal is reached when the students can combine and divide sentences, diagram them (as a way of demonstrating this ability), and show a good understanding of words, with the specific knowledge of at least fifteen common prefixes, as many suffixes, and perhaps fifteen or twenty stems.

The *sixth grade* should first review essentials from the fifth grade and then go on to add analysis of sentences with three and four clauses. If the basics have been learned, progress from this point on will be easy, but it must not be taken for granted. The essential difference is that the materials used should now be drawn almost exclusively from two sources: textbooks (whether of literature, social studies, mathematics, science or other) and the students' own writing. Students should be invited to diagram some of their own best sentences and sentences which they have found in their reading. The teacher should scan textbooks of all subjects at that grade level for sentences which might not be completely understood, and should analyze these or have students do it.

Words from all subject areas should also be analyzed. Sixth grade students should be shown how to use a good etymological dictionary. A few simple problems in word analysis should be given for completion in the library. The teacher should keep a file of words for such assignments and a file of especially interesting words for class analysis and discussion—words, for example, such as *influence* and *influenza* (which have identical analyses), *astronomy* and *disaster* (both from Latin *ASTER*, star), *lord, lady, steward* and *marshall* (which are of interesting Germanic origins).

The sixth grade teacher will know the year's goal has been reached if the students can analyze, divide, and in general freely manipulate sentences with as many as four clauses, and can write sentences of three clauses effectively—and if they know some twenty-five or thirty prefixes, as many suffixes, and at least forty stems (mostly from Latin but a few from Greek and a few from Germanic or other sources).

The *seventh grade* represents in most districts a move from elementary to junior high school, and with it a strong sense of "growing up" for the child who is entering adolescence. His language study should reflect this movement toward the adult world where knowledge, understanding and communication are of paramount importance. At this point the full nature and extent of grammar should be set forth as a body of knowledge to be mastered; a definition of grammar as a systematic (though not necessarily rigid or even wholly consistent) means of producing meaning out of words. The three grammatical means (word order, inflections and function or relational words) should be explained and demonstrated. Sentence modes should be identified. The nine relational functions (gender, number, person, case, tense, mood, voice, modification and comparison) should be explained and illustrated.

Basic sentence types should be reviewed and the grammatical means and relationships shown. Combinations of sentences with subordinate or dependent or relative clauses, with independent or coordinate clauses, and with mixtures of the two should be demonstrated.

Through the elementary years the emphasis has been on *patterns,* and the means for teaching have been largely imitation and authority. Now, using the familiar structures and relationships, reinforced with visual diagrams, understanding becomes the prime objective. Sentences of considerable grammatical complexity from reading (textbooks from any or all subjects) should be analyzed and explained, with the students doing as much as possible and the teacher ready to answer questions and complete the process. Such sentences should be rewritten, reorganized, broken into shorter sentences that are then recombined, while the question of most effective form or arrangement is considered.

The students should write often and rewrite to gain conscious control of sentence patterns, order of clauses, effective emphasis. Punctuation, up to now largely a matter of imitation and authority, should be considered not only as a convention, but as a means of controlling or guiding the reader.

Among the relational factors, mood and voice will not have been stressed before and even now may be given no more attention than is called for by chance selection of sentences or by student inquiry. But they should not be completely brushed aside if questions arise.

Word study should continue at an increased rate. The Germanic origin of English, the three hundred years of French rule of England and the direct and indirect influx of Latin and Greek words should be talked about.

The seventh grade, then, is a period of transition to an emphasis on understanding and a thorough review of the basic English structures.

Let it be clearly understood that *the understanding of principles is the goal,* not the learning of rules, not an absolutist or "purist" view of "the way the language should be," but the way it *is* when effectively used by authors of recognized stature. Let it be noted and accepted that these authors use dialect, slang, ellipses—but that they use them on a foundation of Standard English and that they are effective precisely as variations on Standard English, just as a musician's variations on a theme depend on that theme for effect.

The preceding paragraph applies not only to the seventh grade, but with equal or increasing emphasis to all English instruction that follows.

The *eighth grade* should fully explore active and passive voice structures. The nonsense that the passive voice is an inferior structure should never be uttered; rather, good writing by fine authors should be read, and a few of their passive structures used as examples. Transformations from active to passive and passive to active should be practiced in a variety of tenses.

All tenses should be clarified and practiced. The assertion by some "new grammarians" that English has only two tenses, present and past, should be relegated to the garbage bin where it belongs. Tense is sometimes a matter of the *form* of the verb but always an identification of time relationships.

Mood should be explored, at least the indicative and conditional. The subjunctive may be undertaken if the students are ready for it, but should probably not yet be insisted on.

The diagram does little if anything to help teach mood. It is helpful in respect to voice in that the subject-object relationship changes: the direct object in an active voice structure becomes the subject in a passive voice structure. The subject in the active voice becomes the agent in the passive (if not omitted), and, when present, becomes an indirect object of the preposition *by*. Thus:

"The pitcher hurled the ball" becomes "The ball was hurled by the pitcher."

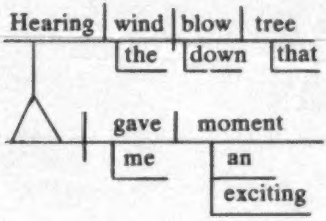
In addition to the active-passive transformation, the diagram should be used to illustrate and clarify modification when it exists in abundance, as it often does in good writing.

Word study should continue, with analysis by prefix, stem and suffix, with words drawn from texts of all subjects taught in the eighth grade and from the students' own writing. Assignments in analysis should be given, with a good, simple etymological dictionary as a standard tool. By now every student should have such a dictionary for regular use, and assignments should lead him to be familiar with it. English began as a Germanic language, but most of the new words are of Latin or Greek origin. To ignore this aspect of the study of English is to condemn the student to ignorance or to vague, uncertain knowledge of the language he will be using the rest of his life.

In the *ninth grade* the fundamentals stressed for the preceding year should be reviewed, including the three grammatical means

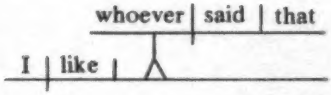
and the nine relational factors. Case, voice, mood and modification should be stressed. The moods should be given thorough attention: indicative, conditional, subjunctive and the uses of the modal (or "mood forming") auxiliaries. Gerunds, participles, appositives (nouns, phrases or clauses used in apposition to a noun in any position or function) should all be taught and illustrated with diagrams. Double functions should be explained, illustrated, diagrammed and assigned for diagramming. Examples:

Double function with a gerund: *Hearing the wind blow down that tree gave me an exciting moment.*



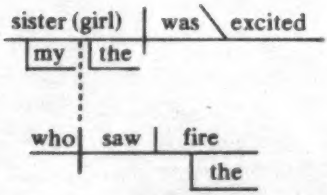
Note that *hearing*, as a noun and verb takes a direct object, *wind;* that *wind* also has a double function, as direct object of *hearing* and as subject of the verb *blow;* and that the entire gerundive phrase is the subject of the verb *gave.*

Subject-Object double function: *I like whoever said that.*



Note that *whoever* is the direct object of *like* and subject of *said,* and that the clause *whoever said that,* as a whole, is the direct object of *like.*

Example of an appositive clause: My sister, *the girl who saw the fire,* was excited.



Note that *girl who saw the fire* is in apposition to *sister* and that *who saw the fire* is an adjective clause modifying *girl.*

The ninth grade should not only review grammatical principles, but should also continue to develop analytical principles of word formation. Word families (those based on a single stem or on the various forms of a single stem) should be introduced. How many English words are developed, for instance, on the stem forms of Latin SPECere, to see? For a start: SPECial, SPECious, conSPICuous, SPECTacles, inSPECTor, deSPICable (also, via French, deSPISE and deSPITE), exPECT, exPECTation, etc. For this kind of exercise the teacher will find Eric Partridge's *Origins, A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* an exceptionally fine source, since it gathers words into families according to the stems or roots and then explains the development of each word. [With some understandable hesitation I mention here also my own dictionary, *Words Every College Student Should Know*. It is, as far as I know, the first purely analytical dictionary, defining words by prefix (es), stem(s) and suffix(es.) The first edition, 1974, is a private publication, available by addressing the author at Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA 90041. The second edition is almost ready for publication and should be more widely available soon.]

Those students who are to become good adult readers need to raise their vocabularies from the couple of thousand words with which they began school to many thousands.

Up to the ninth grade, the emphasis urged here has been on basic sentence structures and the expansion of sentences by modification and combinations of basic forms. Writing prior to the ninth grade will have (and should have) included sentences, paragraphs and even pages. Now the paragraph should be consciously developed as an organized sequence of related sentences. Paragraphing should not, however, be taught as an absolute. Any examination of writing by acknowledged expert authors will make it clear that paragraphs do *not* always begin with topic sentences. Nor is there often one and only one place where a given section of writing could be divided. Still, it is desirable for paragraph breaks to be made from time to time, and they should come at reasonable points in the writing. Ninth grade students should write successive paragraphs, and should be given some guidance but also considerable liberty in making the division.

In the *tenth grade* English class the emphasis should be upon good literature and frequent writing. Great writers of world literature should be read in abundance, including translations of non-English writers. (In many instances the translators are themselves expert writers. The greatness of Homer, Dante, Cervantes,

Thomas Mann, Kafka and hundreds more has been clearly evident in translation—as evident as the greatness of Shakespeare, Milton or Faulkner, for example, all of whom offer some problems in complete understanding to any young reader.) Good literature from whatever source, then, English, American or other, should be read. It should be read for the marvelous experience of seeing and closely examining writing of the finest quality ever produced. Excellent sentences, from poetry as well as from prose, should be analyzed grammatically. Students should be encouraged—even assigned—to "tamper with greatness." Rewrite Milton? Yes! Try rewriting: "When I consider how my light is spent/Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,/And that one talent which is death to hide/Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent/To serve therewith my Maker, and present/My true account, lest He returning chide,/'Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?'/I fondly ask:—But Patience, to prevent/That murmur, soon replies, 'God doth not need/Either man's work or His own gifts. Who best/Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state/Is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed,/And post o'er land and ocean without rest;/They also serve who only stand and wait."

The first ten lines are one sentence, one magnificent sentence, as any serious effort at rewriting will soon demonstrate. Such a sentence may be analyzed grammatically for clauses (and the kind of each as an embedded sentence: is it subject-verb, subject-verb-direct object, or what?), for the mood and voice of each verb, the unmodified elements and those that modify, etc. Great literature should be an experience in mastery of language as well as in ideas, imagination, emotion, and the senses—and the one type of experience should and can enhance the other.

The tenth graders should learn something about the origins and development of the English language. They should see examples of Old English, Middle English (Chaucer, certainly) and of Shakespeare's language. They should learn of the 300-year period of French influence, and of the British trade and scholarship which later produced an enormous growth of vocabulary. They should learn how science and technology still later made further demands on language, and some of the new words coined to fill the new needs. They should learn about dialects, slang, and the melting-pot nature of American English, which has absorbed elements of the speech of immigrants—and slaves—from Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa.

And they should write, should learn to cast words they know

more than superficially into effective sentences and these into effective paragraphs and essays. Because the processes of thought depend on the processes of language they should discover style to express their thoughts as accurately as possible: loose and periodic sentences, parallel structures, balance, the uses of rhetorical devices. The textbooks for good writing should not be literary alone; historians, scientists and mathematicians, for example, have also been masters of the craft of writing.

When the program briefly outlined here is adopted and carried through the tenth grade, many students will see the value of what they have done and of the potential for further learning that lies ahead. There should be one further required year of study: half devoted to selected masterpieces of world literature, half to selected works of Anglo-American literature. There should also be an elective course in creative writing, combined with the reading of poetry and short stories.

The curriculum proposed here has put emphasis on mastery of language; it has not stressed the marking of errors. These should be corrected, but they should not be allowed to dominate the instruction or the students' attention. Students should learn that errors are distractions to the reader, sometimes interfering with the transmission of ideas, and are therefore undesirable, but not that they are sure signs of failure. Imperfect excellence is much better than perfect mediocrity, if one has to choose. With a sense of competence in structure and a sure mastery of a growing vocabulary hopefully there will come the desire to make every aspect of the writing as good as possible.

Two final suggestions: In every elementary school, junior high school and high school, there should be a coordinating committee to make sure that the parts outlined in this proposal are included at some point in the curriculum, are meshed carefully so that nothing is left out, and are actually taught in the classroom. And, most important: we should not assume that only English teachers need to know how to use the language, and *we should not allow in any classroom teachers who lack a mastery of it.* In their years of schooling, students progress far from the imitation through which they first learned English, but they never completely leave imitation behind. All teachers teach language.

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